

BMAC Sampling Frequently Asked Questions

1. What exactly is EPA going to do at the BMAC?

A: EPA will conduct a pre-CERCLIS screen. A pre-CERCLIS screening is used to determine if any additional or more extensive assessment or sampling is necessary at a particular site.

2. How long will it take to conduct the screening survey of the BMAC property?

A: The amount of time necessary to complete the site work is dependent on a number of factors such as weather, equipment, gaining access to the property, and ball field scheduling conflicts. EPA currently anticipates to complete screening work within one to two weeks from the time the screening starts.

3. When will EPA conduct the screening and why won't it be done sooner?

A: EPA hopes to begin the screening the week of May 19th – barring unforeseen hurdles. Because we have other active radiation site cleanups, we have to locate and schedule the necessary equipment and radiation experts. In this case we are hoping to access additional experts from Region 5 in Chicago. In addition, because this is not an emergency situation, we must prepare a Quality Assurance Sampling/Project Plan specifically for this assessment to ensure that the proper procedures and methods are followed during the screening and to ensure that the data are of the scientific quality necessary to make decisions that are protective of the public health. This plan must be reviewed and approved by our Quality Assurance experts.

4. How many people are needed to conduct the screening work?

A: At this time, Three On-Scene Coordinators (OSC) will be assigned to complete the screening. The OSCs will be supported by several contractors on and/or off of the site. EPA Region 7 is also working closely with EPA Region 5 to bring in the additional necessary technical experts to conduct the review. The Region 5 staff are participating in order to prevent any delay in completing the screening due to the availability of Region 7 staff.

5. What kind of protective gear is required for the workers who will conduct the survey?

A: For areas such as the BMAC where we do not expect to detect radiation, the workers will wear safety gear consistent with a general construction site such as steel-toed boots, gloves, etc. No special safety equipment is anticipated. The workers will look similar to a survey crew.

6. What is involved in "screening" of the site?

A: EPA will conduct the screening in two phases. First EPA will utilize various radiation detection instruments at the site that will give an indication of whether or not elevated radiation activity is present. EPA will compare those measurements with radiation levels expected naturally in the area and then go to those areas at BMAC and collect samples for a laboratory to analyze more precisely for radiation activity.

7. What levels of radiation will EPA be concerned?

A: EPA risk assessment experts are currently evaluating what radiation activity levels may be natural and/or at an acceptable risk level given the natural background radiation levels for the area and given the types of use and exposure for the area (recreational). It should be noted that radiation activity occurs everywhere naturally through such things as natural grass/plant fertilizers, stone/granite structures, and other naturally occurring radioactive materials. Background screening will be conducted at other locations in the area to attempt to determine what these background levels of radiation might be.

8. After the on-site screening is done, how long will it take to know the results?

A: This is dependent on how long it will take the laboratory to perform the analyses of the samples. At similar sites, this has taken over 30 days on an expedited analyses. Upon completion of the screening, EPA will compile the data into a comprehensive report. After the appropriate quality assurance and quality control protocols have been followed to validate the data, EPA will release the report.

9. Who will be analyzing the samples?

A: EPA will be utilizing a laboratory, to analyze any samples that are collected that is fully accredited to perform the analyses utilizing the proper methods. EPA will also be factoring in which laboratory can perform the analyses as quickly as possible.

10. How and when will EPA share the results with the public?

A: After EPA technical staff have reviewed the results and the appropriate quality assurance and quality control protocols have been followed to make sure the data are accurate, the report will be posted to the West Lake Landfill webpage on the EPA Region 7 website. EPA will also communicate the results to the public through other means such as the West Lake Update and notifications to the press.

11. Who is paying for the radiation screening at the BMAC? How much will it cost?

A: As this is a pre-CERCLIS screening and there is no indication that the potential radiation detection in the drainage ditch originates from West Lake Landfill, the work will be funded by EPA using taxpayer dollars. EPA currently estimates the screening will cost \$50,000 in both EPA and contractor costs.

12. Why are you testing at the BMAC and not any of the properties adjacent or closer to West Lake Landfill?

A: The recent information provided by Ms. Chapman regarding potential radiation detected in a drainage ditch has caused a lot of concern about the safety of the ball fields. While all scientifically-validated data indicates that the contaminants remain within the site boundary, EPA is committed to protecting public health. By conducting this screening, EPA may re-assure the community that the ball fields remain suitable for use.

13. Will the work done at the BMAC affect other work being done by EPA in Missouri?

A: The resources used for the pre-CERCLIS screening will be unavailable for use for other environmental projects in Missouri. At this time, EPA Region 7 has not had to redirect resources from ongoing, active, or scheduled cleanups. We have been able to draw upon our partners in Region 5 to schedule this screening as soon as possible.

14. Does EPA maintain its position that the contaminants remain contained within the boundaries of the West Lake Landfill site?

A: Yes. EPA has not seen any scientifically validated data to indicate that any contamination from the landfill has migrated off-site.

15. What equipment will EPA use to conduct the screening?

A: EPA may utilize a number of different radiation detection equipment, geographical positioning system (GPS) equipment, and software to create mapping products indicating where radiation may be present above natural background radiation levels. EPA will then use simple soil sampling equipment and containers to collect samples for a laboratory to analyze and verify whether or not the screening data were valid and whether or not it is radiation related to the West Lake Landfill Site. EPA personnel will be on the site in vans or SUVs and may utilize UTVs or push buggies to be able to cover the area in a shorter amount of time. These equipment are highly sensitive and the effectiveness of their use will be dependent on absence of distraction/disruption and uninterrupted operation by highly trained radiation experts.